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The Craft of Old-Master Drawings

James Watrous

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A comprehensive study of the techniques of drawing, this is both a historical work, covering the period from the late Middle Ages to the present, and a useful manual for contemporary artists. It presents the old masters' techniques by means of a thorough study of the historical and written evidence of the tools and materials used. The author also includes a series of workshop procedures he has developed with which the contemporary artist may produce the equivalents of the techniques of earlier draughtsmen. This book comprises a body of knowledge that is essential to students of art history, curators, collectors and artists, and is a significant addition to the literature on drawing.

In addition to his scholarly investigation of earlier practices, the author identifies materials and processes used by such important artists as Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Romney, Picasso, Michelangelo, Watteau, Holbein, Tiepolo, and Delacroix. For the artist interested in reproducing the effects achieved by these and many other acknowledged masters, there are full discussions and specific directions concerning the making of inks, styluses, reed and quill pens, fabricated chalks, and instructions for preparing grounds for metalpoint drawings. At every step, the discussion is supplemented with illustrations from laboratory experiments and from drawings by both old and contemporary artists. Of the more than sixty illustrations included, thirty-six are reproductions of master works, and among the others there are microphotographic enlargements of detail showing the differences in density and texture produced by various tools on different papers or grounds. Thus, as a collection of master drawings, the book is worthy of the art lover's library; as a technical study, it is an indispensable aid to the art student and practicing artist.

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